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Parks and Recreation Minutes 9/14/2004

Park and Recreation Commission Minutes

Tuesday, September 14, 2004 - 7:00 p.m.

Approved - Meeting Minutes

The meeting came to order at 7:00 PM.

Commissioners Present: Joseph Carabello, Thomas Caccavaro, Nancy Campbell, Leslie Mayer, and Don Vitters

Staff Present: Jonathan Jalbert, Recreation Superintendent

Patsy Kraemer, Director of Human Services

Others: John Coles & Roland Chaput of Friends of Robbins Farm

Peter Lackey & Alex Hoffinger of Friends of Waldo Park

1. Welcome and Approval of Minutes

Mr. Carabello welcomed the Commissioners and Guests to the September 14th Meeting.

MOTION (made by Leslie Mayer, 2nd by Nancy Campbell)

THE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION APPROVES THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 8, 2004 AND JULY 13, 2004 MEETINGS AS AMENDED, AS WELL AS THE COMMISSION MEETING SCHEDULE AS PROPOSED.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS (5-0) IN FAVOR OF THE MOTION.

2. Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair

MOTION (made by Leslie Mayer, 2nd by Thomas Caccavaro)

THE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION NOMINATES AND APPROVES JOSEPH CARABELLO AS CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMISSION FOR ANOTHER TERM.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS (5-0) IN FAVOR OF THE MOTION.

MOTION (made by Donald Vitters, 2nd by Nancy Campbell)

THE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION NOMINATES AND APPROVES THOMAS CACCARAVO AS VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMISSION FOR ANOTHER TERM.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS (5-0) IN FAVOR OF THE MOTION.

3. Friends of Robbins Farm

Mr. Roly Chaput, and Mr. John Cole of the Friends of Robbins Farm Committee addressed the Commission to seek final approval and to address any questions the

Commissioners may have regarding the prospect of painting a mural on the concrete wall at the base of the slide at Skyline Park. A sample of the artwork was shared with the commissioners. This sample was painted by the 5th Grade Students from the Brackett School. Materials for the project will be supplied by the Friends of Robbins Farm, and the artist overseeing the project is Mr. Coles, who cited many samples of previous work, and has much experience in painting murals. Mr. Chaput informed the Commission he is aware of the concern regarding graffiti or vandalism of the mural and they have investigated the use of a specialized paint which sticks to concrete and can be cleaned. This

paint product is more expensive but they believe it will be worth the investment.

Commissioner Caccavaro stated he respects the hard work of the Friends of Robbins Farm and thanked them for their many contributions. He stated he supports many of the projects being discussed, however, he can't support the painting of the mural for several reasons including the prospect of vandalism, and the continued responsibility of upkeep. Mr. Caccavaro stated that in his experience as a contractor the only known way of getting graffiti off a concrete wall would be by sandblasting, and he has not been made aware of any paint that would be fool proof or graffiti proof. Lastly, he is concerned with the precedent being set that murals can be painted on public property, and he is concerned that if this project is approved, many other requests will follow, and the town would ultimately be responsible for maintaining these murals once created on town property.

Commissioner Mayer stated she researched several sites on the internet, including graffitihurts.com and believes the mural if well kept, and brush painted may be a deterrent to graffiti or vandalism. Further she believes each decision should be made on a case by case basis.

Commissioner Campbell was impressed with the sample presented to the Commission and stated her belief that the mural would be an improvement to the existing wall. She further stated that if the existing wall was vandalized, it would still need to be sandblasted, and inquired if it would be possible to repaint over any graffiti, instead of sandblasting.

Mr. Caccavaro stated that the Commission must evaluate not only the effect on this property at Robbins Farm, but what it might mean to the town as a whole. Lastly he stated that this project would need the approval of the Town Manager, and he would adamantly state his arguments and objections directly to the Town Manager.

Mr. Caccavaro recommended stone veneer as a possible solution, which may help the goal of improved aesthetics of the park, but may be more easily maintained/repaired if necessary.

Commissioner Vitters appreciated the thoughtful discussion by his colleagues on the Commission and understands the concerns as well as the enthusiasm for this project. Mr. Vitters stated that if a mural was approved it would need to last a very long time. Additional he stated that if aesthetics was the driving force, he recommended investigating the cost of stone facing, or stone veneer 1/2 to 2 inches of stucco on the wall with a cap may be a viable solution.

Commissioner Carabello stated that in his investigation of other murals in surrounding towns, he noticed peeling, and fading paint, from weather, or aging over time. He further stated he appreciates and likes the community involvement in a project of this nature and appreciates the tremendous effort already extended by the Friends Committee.

Mr. Chaput stated there is no immediate rush to proceed with this project this fall and he believes it can wait until next spring. He further stated that he wants what is right for everyone. He offered to investigate the cost of stone veneer, will discuss this matter with the Town Manager, and will report back to the Commission with his findings. Mr. Coles also that the Commission for their consideration and stated that the working with the Children was a wonderful experience.

MOTION (made by Leslie Mayer, 2nd by Nancy Campbell)

THE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION SHALL POSTPONE THE VOTE REGARDING THE PROJECT

PROPOSED BY THE FRIENDS OF ROBBINS FARM TO PAINT A MURAL ON THE CONCRETE WALL UNTIL THE FEASIBILITY OF OTHER ALTERNATIVES CAN BE SUFFICIENTLY RESEARCHED.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS (5-0) IN FAVOR OF THE MOTION

Other Notes Regarding Robbins Farm:

Some upcoming social events planned at Robbins Farm include Shakespeare in the Park, the annual 4th of July Celebration, Movie Nights, and possibly a Portrait Day. Mr. Chaput distributed copies of the Winter/Spring 2004 Robbins Farm Almanac.

The initial planning of several other projects was shared with the Commission, including a contract with a Landscape Design Group, who is working pro-bono, to improve the area of the former tennis courts. A Farm Concept is anticipated, which will tie into the history of the Park, and may use of the original stones of the foundation. This site may be further enhanced with a historic marker or sign. The concrete ground, may be painted with a sundial or compass.

Several plantings were inadvertently weed-whacked during routine maintenance.

Mr. Chaput informed the Commission that one of the goals of the Friends of Robbins Farm Committee is to enhance the existing town property, and stated they will bring all their ideas and suggestions to the Park and Recreation Commission for Approval.

4. Capital Project Updates

Robbins Farm: Commissioner Vitters stated that he has been working with the Architect, Carol R. Johnson Associates, to finish up the Robbins Farm project. Funds have been withheld until the project is complete. One area needing additional work is the lawn, which requires one more slice seeding. An intermittent railing will be installed on the stairs for safety, and the loose rails on the top of the slide will need to be fixed. Part of the plastic slide is cracked, however, this will be the town's responsibility to fix. The Basketball Court area will be filled in and this should take place in the next few weeks. The Jaffee Memorial Tree has been removed due to vandalism, and DPW plans to replace the tree. It is recommended the location of the tree and plaque be moved to avoid future vandalism. This will be done with respect to and in collaboration with the Jaffee Family.

Waldo Park: Mr. Alex Hoffinger and Mr. Peter Lackey of the Friends of Waldo Park addressed the Commission. They found Larson Associates to be very responsive and creative, and they were pleased with the process. The Friends Committee developed a Program Statement which outlined the following goals which included Security and Safety, Fenced in Play Area, and Dog Cleanliness Issues. They are however disappointed with the cost the bids received. Mr. Vitters reported that the bids were received and costs came in much higher than anticipated. Eight Companies took the RFP's, and only 3 actually submitted bids. \$314,000 was the low bid for Waldo, which included 7 alternates, \$228,000 with no alternates, however only \$88,000 is available. Drawing and Specs were great, but cost estimates were low. They are re-evaluating the plan.

Selectman Jack Hurd is investigating to see if any other funds are available. Options include cutting back improvements, which the Commissioners do not feel is a viable option at this time, Re-Bidding the project in January, or looking at other Capital Park Project Money, i.e. Buzzell, or CDBG Money. Mr. Carabello will contact Selectman Hurd and brainstorm the issue.

Crosby Tennis Courts: will need an additional \$80,000 based on bids. Both

Crosby and Waldo are CDBG. Locke is not. The Recreation Division was informed by Larson Associates that the Tennis Courts are closed due to the test pits needed, and this information was posted on the web-site as well as on the cancellation hotline. Mr. Jalbert will follow up with another inspection of the site to determine if they can be re-opened with the expected delay due to the recent funding concern.

Locke Playground: The low bid for Locke was \$264,000, also higher than available funds.

Mr. Jalbert and Mr. Vitters reported that Thompson Playground still needs to be resurfaced with rubberized materials. There have been many injuries, including a recent one, due to the compacted surface. Quotes are currently being sought to address this safety concern, and costs are expected to be between \$30,000 - \$40,000.

There are 8 projects planned for this year, and the draft Capital Plan Report needs to be submitted to Nancy Galkowski, Deputy Town Manager. The following revisions were recommended:

FY-06, Seek an additional \$80,000 CDBG funds for the completion of Crosby Tennis Courts. Seek an additional \$200,000 CDBG funds for Waldo. Seek an additional \$120,000 for Locke Playground FY-05. Postpone the following projects one year from FY-06 to FY-07: Hurd Field, Summer Street, and Wellington. Postpone the following projects one year from FY-07 to FY-08: Hibbert Street, Poets Corner, Robbins Farm, and Turkey Hill. Postpone the following projects one year from FY-08 to FY-09: Reservoir, and Wellington. Postpone the following project one year from FY-09 to FY-10 Poets Corner.

MOTION (made by Leslie Mayer, 2nd by Thomas Caccavaro)

THE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION ACCEPTS THE CHANGES/AMENDMENTS TO THE PROPOSED CAPITAL PLAN WHICH SHALL BE SUBMITTED TO THE DEPUTY TOWN MANAGER.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS (5-0) IN FAVOR OF THE MOTION

Spy Pond Shores: Mr. Don Vitters reported that Spy Pond Bids were received (6 Bidders), and the project has \$720,000 to spend. The low bid was made by Heimlich Construction Company for \$716,000 with all the alternates included. The project will start in 1-2 weeks, and there will be a walk through on Friday September 17. Constructing of the staging area is waiting for approval of 3-4 permits. Mr. Vitters is working with Ms. Krapelka, B.O.S Administrator for these permits. The trailer, materials, and equipment area will be fenced off and will be brought in through the tunnel. Signage will be placed on Mass Avenue. They will consider using a police detail if necessary. If the playground remains open an 8' high chain link fence will be installed at a cost of \$2,000-\$3,000 and the opening of the gate will be relocated. Ms. Kraemer will consult with Mr. Brian Sullivan, Town Manager, and Mr. John Maher, Town Counsel, regarding liability issues of keeping the playground open during construction. It is recommended that the Town notify the Arlington Advocate, the Elks Lodge, as well as the Boys and Girls Club, and the Commission may further request the Friends of Spy Pond Group, notify the abutters of the construction project, and playground plans. A concrete slab will be poured for use as the boat ramp, and it is not believed that additional permits will be needed to be pulled from the Conservation Commission. The contractor is aware of all conservation requirements. Ron Santosuoso will plan meetings on every other Tuesday at 10:30. Carol Johnson will be taking the minutes of these meetings. Mr. Santosuoso has also stated he will keep an eye on the project, and check in 1x per day. He is concerned with drainage issues. Mr.

Carabello suggested that Rodent Control should be monitored careful, based on experience with other projects surrounding waterways and areas that may be natural habitats for rodents. Mr. Vitters distributed a handout entitled Spy Pond Park Capital Improvements.

5. Committee Updates

Field Policy Committee. The Field Policy Committee has met once, and the next meeting is scheduled for September 22nd. Nancy Campbell will represent the Park Commission on this Committee, and was nominated as Secretary. The Committee is still in the process of setting up, and collecting data. DPW is getting a list together. Lisa Reale (ASC and Town Moderators Appt) was nominated as Chair Person of the Committee. Others members are: Jonathan Jalbert, Superintendent of Recreation, Theresa DeBenedictis, DWP, Tony Lionetta (Capital), Steve Moniak (ASC and Selectman's appt.), Kevin Wall (Adult Soccer), Jim Robillard (Babe Ruth Baseball). The Committee also will have 2 HS Representatives, but they were not present at the first meeting.

Sports Center Improvement Committee. The Sports Center Improvement Committee met and all members were present. Mr. Caccavaro will be the Park and Recreation Commission Representative. Other Members are: Mr. Jalbert, Superintendent of Recreation, Mr. Bartholomew (Arlington High School's Representative), Mr. Shine (Arlington Catholic's Representative), Mr. Augustino (Youth Hockey Club Representative). Ms. Nancy Campbell stated there are no women on the Committee and she would like to be added as an additional representative to the SCIC, which Mr. Carabello approved. Mr. Carabello also stated that he does not believe it would violate any open meeting laws/requirements have several Commissioners gathered at this meeting.

Open Space Committee. Ms. Leslie Mayer reported that the Open Space Committee had a Booth at Town Day. She further stated they are closely monitoring the Symmes site and Belmont uplands. It was reported that several recently planted Pine Seedlings were the victim of Weed-Whacking at the Minuteman Bikepath and it was recommended that any new plantings be reported to DPW.

Friends Groups.

FOCCA – The Proposed Dog Park at McClellan Fields is still up in the air. FOCOA is staying on top of this issue, but is not pushing forward aggressively, and is looking for alternative locations.

6. Recreation and Rink Update

Arlington Recreation had a Booth at Town Day and had the annual Town Day Road Race. The Fall Brochure was sent out, and received many compliments. Many new programs were added. Fall Programs are underway. The Rink opened up on time, in spite of the very humid weather conditions the first week. Opening early in September can cause difficulties due to the warm floor bed, old equipment, and weather conditions. The Fall Field Schedule is posted on-line as well as the Rink Schedule. Mr. Jalbert thanked Lisa Reale for her assistance in this project. Rec-Trac training has been scheduled. The fencing at Thorndike Field does not extend to the end. Theresa DeBenedictis of the DPW will follow-up.

Volunteer Credit Proposal

MOTION (made by Nancy Campbell, 2nd by Thomas Caccavaro)

THE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION REQUESTS THE SUPERINTENDENT OF RECREATION CONTINUE WITH THE VOLUNTEER CREDIT PROGRAM AT THIS TIME, WHEREAS THE SUPERINTENDENT SHOULD MEET WITH THE BOTH HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC DIRECTORS, AS WELL AS THE PRESIDENT OF THE ARLINGTON HOCKEY AND FIGURE SKATING CLUB, TO DETERMINE WAYS TO EARN THE CREDITS. IT IS THE GROUPS RESPONSIBILITY TO ORGANIZE AND PLAN THESE PROJECTS, THROUGH THE DIRECTION OF THE ATHLETIC DIRECTORS/PRESIDENT WHO SHALL ACT AS LIASONS TO THE SUPERINTENDENT.

VOTE: (3-1-1) IN FAVOR OF THE MOTION
Affirmative (Mr. Caccavaro, Ms. Campbell, Ms. Mayer)
Negative (Mr. Carabello)
Abstain (Mr. Vitters)

7. Other

Ms. Leslie Mayer received concerns regarding the equipment at Florence Field. Mr. Vitters informed Ms. Mayer there is \$25,000 for Florence this year for the timber edging and a slide could be added. Mr. Jalbert will schedule a safety assessment, which will be coordinated with Game Time and Mr. Sanchez of the DPW.

Captain's Practices for Arlington High School's Hockey teams are being discussed. The AHS Girls team is all set. The request made by the Boy's teams (after school on Tuesdays and Thursday's through the month of November) cannot be accommodated, because these hours have been booked with Mr. Bartholomew's Middle School Program. Three skating sessions for Captain's Practices have been scheduled for Thanksgiving Week, and this is being coordinated and scheduled through Coach Bartholomew.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:45 pm